



Summary of Public Input

The Asheville Greenways Master Planning effort involved the citizens of Asheville in several ways, in order to ensure a final product that meets the needs of the local community. At the beginning of the master planning effort, a Citizens Advisory Committee was formed to provide focused input and feedback throughout the planning process. This committee included approximately thirty representatives from the Planning Department and other City staff, local and regional agencies, interested organizations, private land-owners and local businesses.

The general public was invited to several workshops to comment on the Greenways Master Plan. The first series of workshops took place on January 26 and March 16, 1998. The purpose of these two Vision, Goals and Objectives workshops was to educate the public about the benefits of greenways and to define a vision, goals and objectives for greenways in Asheville. Citizens were asked to vote on the goals and objectives to rank their importance. Approximately 75 citizens attended the two workshops. The second series of workshops took place on April 22 and 23, 1998. Approximately 85 citizens attended these workshops to comment on the proposed greenway system plan. The third series of workshops took place on August 24 and 25 in order to provide the public with an opportunity to comment on the final master plan.



Public Opinion Poll

In order to better gauge public attitudes towards greenways, a public opinion survey was conducted. Marketwise, Inc., a professional public opinion survey firm was commissioned by the Trust for Public Land to conduct the survey. Four hundred and one randomly selected Asheville residents participated in telephoned interviews from May 19 to June 4, 1998. Interviews lasted 16.5 minutes on average. The sampling error for the sample is plus or minus 5 percentage points in the 95 percent confidence level.

The survey revealed that the majority of Asheville residents are aware of greenways and are overwhelmingly supportive of an expanded greenway system. 56 percent of those surveyed indicate they are aware of the concept of greenways and about the same



Public support for greenways was not limited to the public workshops held for this master planning effort. The excerpt shown here is from the Mountain Express, a local newspaper, which in May of 1998 took a poll of its readers. The readers voted greenways to be the "best use of local tax dollars".



percentage, 54 percent, know of an existing greenway in Asheville. After reviewing the components of greenways, an overwhelming 90 percent are favorable towards establishing a greenway system in Asheville.

Large majorities of Asheville residents surveyed believe the following greenway issues are important or very important: to preserve open space/natural areas along rivers and streams to improve drinking water quality (86 percent); to preserve open space/natural areas along rivers and streams to filter pollutants before they flow into rivers and streams (82 percent); to protect open space/natural areas from growth and development (71 percent); to conserve habitat for plants and animals (67 percent); to create a French Broad River greenway and park (58 percent); and to develop trails to promote more walking and bicycling (55 percent).

Asheville residents were also read arguments (in random order) for and against greenways in Asheville. When asked if they agreed or disagreed that an expanded greenway system would improve the overall quality of life in Asheville, 63 percent agreed with this statement. Sixty-one percent agreed that an expanded parks and greenway system would improve people's health by providing places for walking and bicycling. When read the argument that an expanded parks and greenways system would increase the value of property adjacent to it, 49 percent agreed with this statement. 62 percent disagreed with the argument against greenways that parks and greenways attract crime and hurt the value of property adjacent to them.

Most Asheville residents, 92 percent, indicate they or other household members participate in some type of recreational or greenway related activity. Walking is by far the most popular activity, with 82 percent of those surveyed responding that they walk for recreation. Other popular recreational and greenway related activities include bird watching (43 percent), bicycling (42 percent), jogging (31 percent), canoeing/boating (31 percent).

Regarding potential use of greenways for alternative transportation, almost half, 46 percent, of Asheville residents indicate that if greenways and trails were provided between their home and work, school, shopping, recreational facilities, and cultural facilities and parks, they would walk or bicycle occasionally to these destinations. A full quarter of Asheville residents, 25 percent, would walk or bicycle most or all of the time if greenways and trails were provided between their home and these destinations.

